



# A STUDY ON RAGAS AND TALAS OF JAYADEVA'S GITA GOVINDA AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS ODISSI MUSIC

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## ABSTRACT

Music plays a prime role in Odishan art and culture. The culture of Odisha is based on Lord Sri Jagannath's culture which reflects in the way of life of people of Odisha. In Odisha, original Indian classical music in the form of "Raga-Pravandha-Gana" was transformed to Raga-Ksyudra-Geeta Pravandha Gana by Sri Jayadeva, the great composer, musician and a saint poet of Odisha as well as great devotee of Lord Jagannath. Sri Jayadev has not only originated a unique music tradition, systematic form and definite melodic pattern, raga-tala repertoires but also built a socio-cultural community in ancient period. The purity, sanctity and characteristic features of Odissi music have been enriched refined and pervaded its horizon through Gitagovinda of Sri Jayadev. Poet Jayadeva composed Gitagovinda and for the first time in Odisha lyrics were composed by applying systematic tune. Gitagovinda was performed by Devadasis in temple in honour of Jagannath and the form of music which has been sung in the world famous Jagannath temple at sacred Puri as a part of the temple services gradually took the form of traditional Odissi music as known today. The evolution of Odissi music owes a lot to poet Jayadeva and his composition the "Gitagovinda". The compositions of Geeta Govinda were written with an object to be sung. Gitagovinda was composed at a time when Indian classical music was not divided into two regional streams, namely Hindustani and Carnatic, and thus was one single tradition.

**KEY WORDS:** Jayadeva, Gitagovinda, Raga, Tala, Odissi, Music.

## INTRODUCTION:

Saint Poet Jayadev was truly a successful pioneer of beautiful and meaningful lyrics. Although there is no evidence that he was a scholar of music but undoubtedly he had an insight into the art of music and he had a great vision of music. His composition Gitagovinda which has a worldwide appreciation shows about his immense knowledge of music Gitagovinda is not a scripture of music but it is a poetry filled with musicality. The sweet flow of music is abundantly eminent in the entire Gitagovinda composition. Gitagovinda is richly composed of ornate language. 'Rasa', 'Bhava' and much other literary embellishment found in this lyrical composition. The lyrical composition which is richly embellished with 'Rasa' 'Bhava' and many other literary ornate, is also rich with musicality. The musicality of Gitagovinda poetry is unfolded first from its naming. Historian Kedarnath Mohapatra while explaining about its worthy name had said the following lines. "It has been composed with an intension to be sung before Lord Sri Jagannath or Sri Govinda as per the following ornate stanza "Sri Hari Pravara, Sri Hari Sevaka, Sri Hari Charan Saranna, Sri Hari Binihita Chitta" composed by the devotional poet Sri Jayadev had rightly titled this poetry as Sri Gitagovinda (Das, 2004). Hence Jayadev, considered as the foremost devotee of Lord Sri Jagannath had chosen 'Geeta' (song) as the best medium to appease his own deity Sri Jagannath & for the sake of his deity he composed Gitagovinda (Ray, 1998). This word 'Geeta' is inherent in the poetry of Gitagovinda has much significance. It is said that a song is one which belongs to the religion of singing or in other words a song is one which is worth singing. This religion of singing is one of the best specialties of 'Gitagovinda' Poetry (Dimock, 1966). The simple, lucid and singing worthy language that has been used in the composition of Gitagovinda has made its singing process truly natural. Gita-Govinda comprises twelve Cantos (Sargas), twenty-four Songs and seventy-two Slokas. All the Sargas are designed with various melodious Ragas or Tunes such as Malava, Gurjari, Vasanata, Ramakeri, Deua, Guoakari, Gauḍa-Malava, Karoḍapaka, Baradi, Deua-Baradi, Bhairavi, Vibhasa etc. along with different (Tala) musical modes such as Rūpaka, Yati, Ekatali, Pratimaḍpha, Aḍava etc. having Ashpāpādis. By the poet, the twelve cantos have been named as 'Samoda-Damodara', 'Akleūa-Keūava', 'Mugdha-Madhusūdana', 'Snigdha-Madhava', 'Sakañksha-Puḍarikaksha', 'Sotkaḍpha-Vaikuḍpha', 'Nagara-Narayaḍa', 'Vilakshya-Lakshmiḍati', 'Mugdha-Mukunda', 'Chatura-Chaturbhujā', 'Sananda-Govinda' and 'Suprita-Pitambara'. Some slight variations of names are seen in different editions of this book. From the name or heading of each canto, one can find the concerned topic along with alliteration bearing sweet, graceful and captivating letters (Patnaik, 2007). Gita-Govinda Kavya is endowed with sweet, soft and beautiful words. Musical affluence, serenity, rhythmic eloquence, lucidity, emotional touch and sweetness of meaning are the fine features of this lyric poem. Considering all these matters, it may not be inappropriate to proclaim: "Govinde Pada-Lalityam."

## OBJECTIVES:

The General objective of this research paper is to understand The Contribution of Poet Jayadeva to Odissi music through his historic Gitagovinda. The foremost objective of this research paper is to analyze the impacts of Gitagovinda on Odissi Musical Trends and its different aspects. The objective of the study is also to explore the Ragas and Talas of Jayadeva's Gitagovinda and its relevance in contemporary Odissi music. The approach taken in the present study is also to evaluate the musical values of Jayadeva's unique compositions.

## METHODOLOGY:

This is a theoretical research paper, where through review of literature and historic research methods secondary data have been used for the analysis. The secondary data were collected from published and unpublished documents of government departments and private agencies. Besides this, secondary data were also collected from manuscripts, research reports, research papers, journals and books. The study is both empirical and descriptive.

## RESULTS:

The ceaseless tradition of 'Gitagovinda' song performance is still continuing today and remains unchanged across Odisha. The singing and listening of Gitagovinda is considered as a matter of pride and honour (Greenlees, 1979). About the period of Ninth-Tenth century, the word 'Sangeeta' (music) had come to be known in the Indian History of Music. The credit of its first pioneer ship goes to 'Naarad' the author of 'Sangeeta Makarand', though there are different opinions on this. But it was Sangeeta Ratnakar Sarang Dev, whose approval and recognition of this word 'Sangeeta' resulted its inclusion in the glossary of Indian Music and got recognition as a word with definition. During era of Jayadev the word "Sangeet" though had come into existence, the word 'Gaandharv' had not completely made its exit (Mahapatra, 2008). Moreover Gitagovinda, as per the definition of 'Gaandharv' was composed with the combination of 'Svara' (Raga) and 'Tala' based stanzas and hence in the true sense it had the characteristics of 'Gaandharva'. A question may arise, that 'Gitagovinda' is not only a presentation of 'Svara' (tunes), 'Pada' and 'Tala' but also is base of dance. Whereas 'Nrutya' (dance) is not a part of 'Gaandharva' art. Since the era of Jayadev is the exit period of 'Gaandharva' and the beginning period of 'Sangeeta' and along with 'Geeta' (song) and 'Vaadya' instrumental music, dance or 'Nrutya' is also considered as the major part of this 'Sangeeta', so there should be no clash of opinions over this 'Gaandharva' and 'Sangeeta' which have much similarities.

Hence as a result of this Jayadev had said that his lyrical composition 'Gitagovinda' featuring songs-instrumental music-dance etc. is a representation of the 'Gaandharva' art form (Kuppuswamy, Gowri and Muthuswamy, 1980). Jayadev has written his own name in every last stanza of his every 'Prabandha' and hence those stanzas belong to 'Aabhoga' category. The 'Dhrubha' and 'Aabhoga' parts in every 'Prabandha' of 'Gitagovinda' are having six stanzas each. This is also recognised as per 'Sangeet Shashtra'. Though the series of 'Prabandha' composed in the 'Gitagovinda' are tuneless but the names of 'Svara' (Tunes) are not directly mentioned anywhere in the 'Dhatu' parts of the 'Prabandha'.

## DISCUSSION:

The raga repertoire used in Gitagovinda is being recited in Lord Jagannath temple as well as all the corners of Odisha since 12<sup>th</sup> century. The musical splendor of Gitagovinda is genuinely revealed in Gitagovinda due to 'Raga' and 'Tala' mentioned in this. 'Raga' is said to be the soul of music. The heart touching tunes ('Svara' like 'Shadaj', 'Rushabh' etc.) and 'Barna' (like 'Sthayee', 'Aarohi', 'Abarohee' and 'Sanchari' singing process) along with melodious sounds is called 'Raga'. A special sound adorned with hearting tunes ('Svara' like 'Shadaj', 'Rushabh' and 'Barna', like 'Sthayee', 'Aarohi', 'Abarohee' and 'Sanchari' singing process is called 'Raga'. The lyrical lines of Gitagovinda are embellished with

ornate sentences and apart from this is composed on basis of melodious 'Ragas' which are delightful. Hence the 'Prabandha' series of Gitagovinda epic is the best medium of appealing Lord Sri Sri Jagannath. The 'Ragas' and 'Talas' meant for twenty four 'Prabandhas' of Gitagovinda are mentioned below.

*First Prabandha:* 'Malab Raag', 'Rupak-Tala' (Pralayaprayodhi Jaley.....), *Second Prabandha:* 'Gujjari Raga', 'Nishaar- Tala' (Shritakamala Kuchamandala), *Third Prabandha:* 'Basant-Raga', 'Jati- Taal' (Lalita Labangalata parishillana.....), *Fourth Prabandha:* 'Ramakari- Raga' ( Basanta Raga) and 'Jati-Tala' (Chandan Charchita Neeka Kalebara...), *Fifth Prabandha:* 'Gurjjari Raga', 'Jati- Tala' (sanchradadhara-Sudhamadhura Dhvani....), *Sixth Prabandha:* (Malaba Gouda Raga', 'Gundakiri Raga'), 'eka- Taali- Tala' (Nibhruta Nikunjagruhang Gataya Nishi.....), *Seventh Prabandha:* 'Gurjjari-Raga', 'Jati- Tala' (Mamiyang Chalita Bilokya....), *Eighth 'Ashtama-Prabandha':* 'Karnaata-Raga', 'Ekataali-Tala' (Jati) (Nindati chandanamindu Kiranamamu.....), Nabam (*Ninth Prabandha:* 'Baishakhya- Raga' Jati (Rupak) Tala (Stanabinihitamapi Haramudaram), Dasham (*Tenth Prabandha:* 'Desha (Deshi) baradee- Raga', 'Rupak-Tala' (Bahati Malaya Sameeray.....), Ekadasha (*Eleventh Prabandha:* 'Gurjjari-Raga', Eka-Taali- Tala (rati sukhasaaray Gatamabhisaaray.....), Dwadash (*Twelfth Prabandha:* 'Gondakiri Raga', 'Rupak Tala'-(pashyati Dishishish....), Trayodash (*Thirteenth Prabandha:* 'Malava-Raga', Jati-Tala(Kathitaw Samayayapi Harirahhaw...), 'Chaturdasha' (*Fourteenth Prabandha:* 'Basanta -Raga', 'Jati-Tala' (Samarochitabirachita Beshaa...), 'Panchadasha' (*Fifteenth Prabandha:* 'Gujjari-Raga', 'Ekatali Tala' (Samudita Madanay Ramanee Badanay....), 'Shodasha' (*Sixteenth Prabandha:* ' Desha-Baradi' (Baraadi) ' Raaaga', 'Rupaka-Tala', (Anila Tarala Koobalaya Nayanenaw...), 'Saptadasha' (*Seventeenth Prabandha:* 'Bhairavi-Raga', 'Jati-Tala' (Rajani Janitaw Gurujaagaraw...), 'Astadsaha' (*Eighteenth Prabandha:* 'Gurjjari-Raga' (Ramakiri-Raga), 'Jati-Tala' (Hari Rabbhisarati Bhati- Madhupawnay...), 'Unabinsha' (*Nineteenth Prabandha:* 'Desha-Baradi-Raga', 'Ashtatati-Tala' (Badasaw Jadi Kinchidapi....), 'Binsha' (*Twentieth Prabandha:* 'Basanta Raga', 'Jati-Tala' (Birachita Chaatubachanrachanang...), 'Ekabinsha' (*Twenty-first Prabandha:* ' Baradi- Raga' ( Desha-Baradi), 'Rupak-Tala' (Manjutarkunjatalakelisadanay....), 'Dwabinsha' (*Twenty-second Prabandha:* 'Baradi-Raga', 'Jati-Tala' (Radhabadana Bilokana Bikashitaw...), 'Trayobinsha' (*Twenty-third Prabandha:* 'Bibhasa-Raga' (Ramakiri-Raga), 'Eka taali-Tala' (Kishalayanatalay Kuru Kamini...), 'Chaturbinsha' (*Twenty-fourth Prabandha:* 'Ramakiri Raga', 'Jati-Tala-(Kurujadunandan Chandanashishira Taranay...).

The 'Ragas' found mentioned in Gitagovinda are, Malab, Gurjjari, Basanta, Ramakiri, Malaba Gouda, Karnaata, Baishakhya, Desha-Baraadi, Gundakiri, Bhairabi, Baraadi and Bibhasa. At places or in some situations 'Mangal-Gurjaari' in place of 'Gurjjari', 'Kedar' in place of 'Karnaata', 'Naad' in the place of 'Bibhasa', Ramakriya etc. 'Ragas' are found mentioned.

## CONCLUSION:

Though several different applications of 'Ragas' have been made in the singing of Gitagovinda, but the tradition of poetry related 'Ragas' have mostly been in use and this tradition has been kept intact. The aforesaid twelve 'Ragas' have slightly been changed now a days, as regards pronunciation point of view but the names of these 'Ragas' have remained almost the same. But the 'Swara'(tunes) of these 'Ragas' have no similarities. The 'Ragas' mentioned in the Gitagovinda in course of time have been changing into various forms, likewise there have also been several changes in the 'Tala' forms. The 'Tala' which are found mentioned in the Gitagovinda are -'Roopak', 'Nishaar', 'Jati', 'Ektaali' and 'Astataali'. The form of these 'Tala' which were there during the period of Jayadev have changed a lot till date. Thus the Prabandha character of Gitagovinda is established through its Ragas and talas. Jayadeva, the master of poetics and musicology, could combine poetry and music in his immortal work. Geeta (Song), Vadya (Music) and Nritya (Dance) constitute the soul of Gitagovinda, which is the fountainhead of Odissi music and dance.

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